

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone and Berlin)

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SUBJECT Opposition Group in Railroad
Union Berlin

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SUPPLEMENT TO
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1. The railroad workers union has some 23,000 members in Berlin. It includes a strong anti-SED group under the leadership of Gustav Pietsch, head of the Welfare Section. Pietsch is reportedly the head of the opposition group in the railroad union in the whole Russian Zone. He maintains contact with union functionaries throughout the zone and receives information from them.
2. The opposition group is aware of its strength and wants to effect an open break with the FDGB. At a conference of functionaries 6 January 1948 in Berlin, Pietsch was able to persuade the leaders to postpone an open break in favor of undermining the FDGB from within.
3. The program of the opposition is as follows. A strong attempt will be made to carry the Berlin union elections slated for this spring. If this succeeds, SED men in key positions will be replaced by opposition functionaries. A petition will then be sent to the zonal railroad union, requesting financial and administrative autonomy for the Berlin union. Pietsch will threaten to affiliate his group with the bizonal railroad union if the FDGB refuses his petition.

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4. Pietsch's tactics are completely governed by the fear of giving the FDGB good propaganda material. The FDGB and SED are eager to pounce on any effort to "split the working class". Pietsch is also fearful of FDGB attempts to bribe his functionaries with lucrative posts.

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